

TEACHING PLAN

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the importance of being a part of a team to grow as believers and accomplish God's task. Students will understand how the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering allows them to be a part of a team to impact their state, their community, and their own lives.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Students race to inflate and tie the most balloons in a minute.

The catch: One student competes against a group of three or more.

- Give each student a handful of balloons.
- Set a timer and instruct the students to begin.
- After one minute, tell everyone to stop and count the number of balloons.
- Compare the number the single student inflated to the number inflated by the group.

ASK

- *Why didn't the solo competitor win?*
- *What difference did it make for the winners to have teammates?*
- *What would have happened if even more people had joined the winning team?*

EXPLAIN

Being a part of a team changes the game. God did not create anyone to live his or her life alone. God designed us to need other people — just look at how people come into the world: tiny little babies relying on someone else to feed them, clean them, and care for them!

ASK

What are some areas in your life where you need the help/support of other people?

God designed us to need other people in nearly every area of our lives, including our spiritual walk! As Christians, we need the help, encouragement, and accountability of other Christians to grow in Christ. We also need other Christians to accomplish the tasks God gives us.

In the book of Nehemiah, we read the story of a God-given task that requires teamwork.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Jews have returned to Jerusalem after being held in captivity for many years. While they are able to come back, their city isn't in great shape. The walls of the city — its protection and defining boundary — are rubble (Nehemiah 1).

Nehemiah is a Jewish man who serves as a cupbearer for the Persian king. His role gives him a position of influence and an audience with the king. After hearing news about the state of Jerusalem's walls, Nehemiah is heartbroken and longs to help his people. He asks the king for permission to return to Jerusalem and oversee the building project. The king grants him his favor and arms him with protection and supplies (Nehemiah 2).

Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, presents his plan for rebuilding, and begins the project. All kinds of people assist in the building project, from perfume makers to a father and his two daughters. People from all sorts of backgrounds are working together on one project (Nehemiah 3).

As the wall progresses, Nehemiah and the Jews are met with opposition.

READ NEHEMIAH 4:6–14

ASK

- *Why were Sanballat, Tobiah, and the others angry?*
- *How did Nehemiah and the Jews respond to their threats?*
- *How did Nehemiah encourage the Jewish people?*
- *Why is it important for us to encourage each other?*

EXPLAIN

Sanballat, Tobiah, and the others did not want to see the Jews rebuild their city walls. The wall was a sign that God's people were rising again as a strong nation. The surrounding nations saw that as a threat to their safety, economy, and power.

The Jews started to feel discouraged and frightened after the people around them began to mock their work and threaten their safety. They began to doubt their ability to finish their task.

Nehemiah reminds them that they're not doing this alone. He gives them a strategy for protection and reminds them that God is on their side. He encourages them to remember the Lord and fight for their families.

Sometimes we as believers face discouragement in our walk with Christ. We become overwhelmed with the task at hand, and we begin to listen to the discouraging lies that surround us. It's so important for us to have other believers on our team to fight with us and remind us of God's truth. It makes a big difference to know we are not alone in our struggles and to be reminded that the Lord is great and mighty, and bigger than any of our problems.

READ NEHEMIAH 4:15–23

ASK

- *What changed in Nehemiah's strategy?*
- *What different roles did people play in the task of rebuilding the wall?*
- *Which roles were the most important?*
- *What would have happened if some of the roles had been lacking?*

EXPLAIN

After further threats, Nehemiah adjusted his plan for rebuilding. He assigned half of the workers to protect the builders. He created a warning system in case of attack.

Some people worked as builders, some as guards. One man was in charge of sounding an alarm. Nehemiah himself patrolled and oversaw the work.

None of the jobs were more important than the other. If no one was protecting, the builders wouldn't be able to focus on their tasks. If no one was building, the wall would never be completed! If no one was keeping an eye out, the Jews would never know if they were under attack. Every single role was vital to the success of the building project.

SHARE

As Christians today, we may not be building a physical wall, but God has called us to a specific task. Read Matthew 28:19–20. Just like Nehemiah and the Jews, we can't complete this task on our own. We need teammates to fulfill the task we've been given.

ASK

- *As Christians, why do we need teammates?*
- *What does being a part of a Christian team look like?*
- *How can you contribute to your Christian team?*

EXPLAIN

As Christians, we need teammates to encourage, challenge, and assist. If God has assigned us the task of making disciples of all nations, we need some help! We need people to remind us of how great God is when we're feeling down. We need people to give us new ideas for ways to fulfill God's task. We need people to fill roles we can't do on our own. We need to be a part of a team.

One major way to be a part of a Christian team is to be a part of a local church. A local church surrounds you with teammates and helps you find ways to serve in fulfilling God's task. Truly being a part of a local church goes beyond attending services or Bible studies. In a healthy family, the members help each other. They teach, encourage, and correct. Each member contributes what he or she is able, whether that's earning money or giving rides or doing chores. In a healthy family, the family members all pitch in. The same is true of a healthy church family. Every member of a church should contribute what he or she can. Sometimes that's being a good listener and learner. Sometimes it's teaching. Sometimes it's giving financially. Many times it's serving! Find how you can be a good teammate to your local church.

As Southern Baptists in Arkansas, our churches make up an even bigger team!

VIDEO

Overview of Dixie Jackson Offering

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention is a team of churches across our state. Each church strives to grow in faith and serve the Lord and their community, but we need each other to accomplish the tasks God has given us. When people give money to the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering, they're giving to their team. They are becoming a part of God's work across Arkansas.

By being a part of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Team, churches get to be a part of something bigger than themselves. They play a specific role in fulfilling God's plan for Arkansas. Some churches might be able to give money to support a BCM. Some churches might be able to host or serve in an Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip. Some churches might even be able to send people to help solve physical problems like health issues or cleaning up after a disaster. All these roles are important. No one person or one church can do it on their own. We all need each other!

ASK

- *What needs do you see in your community that can't be met by one person?*
- *How can you be a part of meeting those needs?*
- *How can you be a part of your Arkansas Baptist team?*

- *Have you ever personally seen a difference made by the Dixie Jackson offering? If so, tell how.*

So what happened to Nehemiah's wall?

READ: NEHEMIAH 6:15–16

EXPLAIN

God honored the work of Nehemiah and the Jews. Together they were able to finish the task before them — not by their own power, but because God was on their side.

None of us could complete God's big task (Matthew 28:19–20) on our own. And even if we all worked together, none of us could complete it without God!

CHALLENGE

Find a way to be a part of a Christian team.

1. Become a part of your local church. Find ways you can serve at and through your local church.
 - Be a part of the praise team.
 - Launch and maintain your church's social media accounts.
 - Volunteer at your church food pantry.
2. Find or start a Christian community at your school. Become friends with other believers to encourage and challenge each other.
 - Meet once a week for breakfast and prayer time.

- Lead a Bible study at lunch.
- Tell each other your goals in reaching lost friends, and hold each other accountable.

3. Become a part of your bigger Arkansas Baptist team.
 - Raise and donate money for the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering.
 - Participate in the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip.
 - Seniors, look into BCM opportunities at your future university.

TEACHER FOLLOW-UP

Continue to remind students of the importance of their involvement in a Christian team. Help them find ways to become participating teammates with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

- Participate in CONNECT, a weekend missions experience for student to get involved in serving their state (<http://www.absc.org/ministries/connect>).
- Host a block party using the block party trailer provided by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering.
- Encourage students to follow Arkansas Baptist State Convention social media accounts to stay updated on Arkansas Baptist contributions in the state.
- Keep students updated on recently deployed Disaster Relief teams, and spend time in prayer for the teams and the disaster survivors.

ABSC.ORG/DIXIEJACKSON